

BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE:

Current Appointment: I am Melissa J. Rupp, the Family and Consumer Science Educator 3 in Fulton County, Ohio. I have served in Area 1 as the sole FCS Educator since September 2017.

Degrees and Certifications: My formal training includes a bachelor's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences, Family Resource Management emphasis with a master's degree in Education focusing on curriculum development. Expanding on this foundation, I have recently become a Certified HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) Housing Counselor (2019), Certified ServSafe Instructor, and Proctor (2017) and have completed financial courses in foreclosure (NeighborWorks), insurance (NGPF), and coaching (Unidos US). Before coming back to Extension (prior employment 1991-1995), I gained credentials in grantsmanship (TGCI), Lean Six Sigma Yellow and Camo Belt, McNellis Compression Planning, and Foundations of Data Management from the Association of Institutional Researchers (A.I.R.)

Context: Fulton County is in the very northwest corner of the state bordering Michigan to the North, metro Lucas County to the east, and rural Williams County to the west. Fulton County has a population of just over 42,000 residents with 8.6% reporting Hispanic ethnicity and 89.2% identified as white, non-Hispanic. The remaining 2.2% of the population was made up of mixed race (1.4%) and .8% black and other races. Fulton County enjoys a robust manufacturing and agriculture-based economy with a median household income of \$60,231 and a median property value of \$137,000. The poverty rate has remained under 10% for almost a decade. Three out of four homes are owner-occupied (77.2%), which is 15% higher than the national average. Also, 95.5% of all Fulton Countians have health coverage and 90% rated their overall health as good to excellent, higher than the state average of 81%. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ranked Fulton County as 20th out of 88 counties (1 being the best) for healthy outcomes and 10th for health factors. However, 72% of county residents are overweight or obese based on their body mass index (BMI). Mental health was highly rated with 14% of the population seeking mental health services or programs of some type. The number 1 cause of anxiety, stress, or depression in Fulton County was financial concerns.

Program Area Focus and Stewardship: My program area is Family and Consumer Sciences and I work in the Fulton County office with a vibrant staff including Ag and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, Water Quality Program Assistant, SNAP-Ed Program Assistant and Regional Specialist, 2 office associates, and Master Gardener volunteers. As a county team member, I have contributed to stewardship through Community Engagement & Equity & Inclusion, Community Impact Engagement Reporting, and leading efforts in the County Plan of Work (CPOW) and needs assessments. As the CPOW steward, I shepherded the process for 2019 with social media engagement and Breakfast on the Farm. As a team, we are published, gave presentations, and won two awards. In 2020, our CPOW was focused on Race-Ethnicity-Gender (REG) data collection and organizing processes to collect data to ensure we are reaching diverse audiences. We were effective in designing Qualtrics that simplified registration processes embedded with REG profiles for all programs.

Job Description: Directly addressing the needs of the county using my skills base, I have focused on Healthy Finances (money management, homebuyer education, grantsmanship) and Healthy People (food safety and preservation as well as Wellness) in the past three years.

Healthy Finances: 40% Money Management and related resource management is the primary focus of my work. I enjoy working from micro to macro systems in the area of financial well-being. I have been able to provide basic money management skills and coaching to individuals through partnerships with Job and Family Services,

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Veterans Services, Food Pantries, and area churches. In the past year, most of these services have moved to a virtual environment that has proved to be a more effective mode of engagement. Homeownership is one of the two biggest contributors to wealth; the two are home equity and retirement accounts. According to a new US Census Bureau report, these two represent 63% of household net worth. The median net worth of homeowners is 80 times larger than that of renters according to the same report. Partnering with local banks, area Habitat for Humanity, and USDA programs I have been offering individual homebuyer education courses. Also, I serve on the OSU Homebuyer team and serve the Ohio Home Finance Agency (OHFA) for online homebuyer education. These programs have increased two-fold year over year over the past three years.

While partnering with the schools, I have built the Real Money Real World (RMRW) program up to serve 6 of the 7 school districts in the county serving over 350 youth each year while engaging more than 80 community professionals as volunteers to work with the youth. This program has the broadest county impact and offers a high level of individual knowledge attainment and impacts youth behavior. The County Job and Family Services acknowledge that RMRW is the number one program impacting Fulton County youth behavior around career pathways and pregnancy prevention. They support this outcome with funding for program continuation and expansion.

In a macro setting, financial well-being impacts the community through grants and programs. I have worked alongside agencies to build strategic plans through compression planning and guided non-profits for grant readiness through planning and utilization of logic models.

Healthy People: Food Safety: 35% Within the first month on the job I engaged with key leaders in the community. While financial well-being was a concern, a closely related topic of food safety in the workplace became evident. In 2017, more than 60% of the Health Department violations for food safety was the lack of a certified Food Safety Manager. Within three months I was trained and passed the certification exam and National Restaurant Association modules for instructors and proctors. Since its inception in Fulton County, more than 110 individuals have been trained with a 93% pass rate. This has a direct impact on county health and economic well-being. Thirteen Food Safety Manager (level 2) classes have been held since beginning this position which has also provided over \$10,000 in cost recovery. Additionally, more than 150 youth have participated in the Person in Charge (formerly level 1) training. This was supported through OhioMeansJobs funding as food service is the most common first job for youth, the funding support was over \$1500. In 2020 I was invited to join the Food Preservation State team. This high-performing team produced two educational series this past year in addition to providing technical support to colleagues across the state. I co-taught in this series as well as assisted with moderating. This small team mobilized quickly during the pandemic to serve a critical need for those seeking food security and independence. Before engaging with the team, I had developed food preservation classes averaging 4 hands-on workshops each year.

Healthy People: Wellness programs 25% Early in my return to Extension I became aware of a team called Live Healthy Live Well. This team mobilized a strong engagement structure to provide consistent programming across Ohio. I began by sharing their content through local challenges while engaging new clients and building a communication database. As the months rolled by, I stepped up in participation and leadership. Including planning teams for the challenges, blog writing, text writing, and Facebook posts. This past year I helped create new lessons (2) and reviewed lessons (3). In response to Fulton County's needs, I provided related content via zoom lessons in 2020. I was proud of the participant comments on the EEET:

- This is the second one of these seminars on practical real-life topics and whoever selects the topics does a superb job.

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- Thank you for providing this seminar- a good conversation on a worthwhile topic, but also very timely given our present circumstances.

Major Accomplishments: When I began my position in Fulton County I was actively engaged in grant development serving on a National Committee under the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) called the Federal Funding Task Force (FFTF). In 2017 I was the co-chair of the national committee with 63 grant professionals from across the nation convening in Washington DC to interview federal agencies and programs to create a master report. I was asked to continue in this role in 2018, making modifications and improving the reporting processes. In 2019 I was invited back to present grantsmanship and funder prospecting. Although invited for 2020, the conference did not proceed. In partnership with Vernon College in Texas, we presented this FFTF Report at the North Central Extension Leadership conference in East Lansing, CASE District 5 Conference in Chicago, IL, and at NEAFCS in Hershey Pennsylvania.

Homebuyer Education has been a shining light as our team was recognized by OHFA as the agency of the year in 2019 and runner-up in 2020. We were also recognized as the Central Region winner with the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) for the Extension Housing Outreach Award and won the 2020 National Award of the same title. Another highlight with Homebuyer Education is the receipt of two scholarships valuing over \$2000 for the NeighborWorks NTI home counseling training and foreclosure education; as well as \$500 for financial coaching with Unidos US Learning Alliance.

After successfully passing the examination of the HUD national standard, a colleague and I worked to coach the homebuyer team toward HUD Certification. To date, 4 members of the team have passed the certification exam. We have also presented at NEAFCS for homebuyer education as well as an ignite at the State Extension Annual Conference.

I am very proud of the work done by the Healthy Finances Team. In 2020 I was invited to be a co-chair of the team. Although organized, the team had not been working toward mutual goals or challenging each other to advance in creative works and the greater body of knowledge. We began planning for Financial Fridays last year and it has been implemented this year. Also, an emergent group of FCS educators began planning for Resource Management. This group was generated from an inquiry from me for those interested in developing content around family resource management and has been meeting for just over a year. I developed a lesson on decluttering (offered 5 times last year at the local, regional, and state levels) with a colleague and supported 6 other colleagues in the development of subsequent lessons about asset management and dispersal of non-titled property. We conducted a literature review, interviewed subject matter experts, and have begun building the curriculum. It is my goal to have it completed for evaluation in 2021.

Service major accomplishments: I serve on three county collaborative committees and received Collaborator of the Year in 2019-2020. At the state level, I have been very active in FCS planning of Healthy Finances and served on the state conference committee. I have reviewed proposals for Annual Conference and NEAFCS and served on the awards review team. At the national level, I am the NEAFCS Awards and Recognition subcommittee chair for 2021. I have served as President of the Great Lakes Virtual Chapter (serving 5 states) of the Grants Professional Association for the past two years.

Plans for the future: I desire to build continuous quality improvement structures into all programs that I am involved with including a structure for marketing and evaluating programs more effectively and efficiently. I am particularly interested in state infrastructure for enhanced sharing of programs and more effective impact reporting. I plan to be involved with research for resource management, financial coaching, and the economic impact of grants in community settings. I will be joining a grant training team of cross-program professionals in the state of Ohio. I intend to seek faculty status.